



TCMC Agency Brief

Information for Regional Agencies About the Community Immersion Experience

Summer 2014

Community Immersion Experience Exceeds Expectations: TCMC Students Visit Heights Elementary Kids Cafe

As part of TCMC's Community Weeks curriculum, known as Community Immersion, several per-clinical students from the South campus visited with young students from the Heights Kids Cafe Program at Heights Elementary School in Wilkes-Barre. Kids Cafe is sponsored by the Commission on Economic Opportunity. Every day nearly 180 children attend the free program where they receive homework assistance, a nutritious evening meal and educational and physical activities. Students from the West campus volunteered at agencies such as Hope Enterprises, Inc., a non-profit organization based in Williamsport that offers a variety of services to enhance the lives of individuals with developmental disabilities. In the North campus, student volunteered at agencies such as the Center for Independent Living in Scranton that offers support for living options to people with disabilities.

"The biggest thing I took away from the experience at the Kids Cafe was how many different avenues were impacted in a positive way for these kids. The program ensures that the child gets a nutritious meal, learns about nutrition and how to make healthy meals at home, gets help with homework, learns about different physical activities, and most importantly gives them somewhere to be every afternoon. For me, these agency experiences have been about learning what I, as a physician, can offer my patient when they come in with problems that can't be solved by a prescription," says TCMC student Trevor Staub, pictured above with Kid's Cafe students.

According to Jennifer Joyce, MD, one of TCMC's professor of Family Medicine, "TCMC's Community Immersion program connects our students with regional communities through partnerships with local service agencies. These partnerships introduce 'Community as Teacher' in our community based approach to health. Our goal for the program is for students to learn the power of collaboration in eliminating health disparities. Through the program, students reflect on the dominant and complex relationships between health and biology, genetics, environment and individual health behaviors. TCMC students see firsthand how socioeconomic status, the physical environment, discrimination, racism and literacy levels impact the health of individuals and communities. This is done through the lens of service as students participate in visits to dedicated local community agencies and structured interviews. Group discussions and guided reflective exercises complete the cycle. It is a great partnership for all."



"The energy at the Kids Cafe in Wilkes Barre is incredible. The after school program is a true testament to a community addressing local needs. I was thoroughly impressed with the emphasis on nutrition and providing children with a safe outlet to learn and grow," said TCMC student, Mary Elyse Lynch, left, pictured with young learners at the Kids Cafe.

Community Immersion Goals & Objectives

The Community Immersion Experience expands an understanding of health care needs by providing opportunities for students in teams to visit with various agencies that provide for family and community health.

Goal:

Develop Clinician-Community Relationships

Learning Objectives:

- Discover diverse constructs/models of community
- Interpret community perceptions of health care (including myths and misconceptions)
- Relate to local community dynamics:
 - Demographic
 - Economic
 - Political
 - History of land use
 - Migration
 - Occupation
- Discover local environments and their impact on health
- Interpret the isolation of the health care community from the community at large
- Demonstrate respect for community integrity, cultural diversity, and multiple determinants of health
- Understand health-relevant policy
- Operate from an open-minded position
- Distinguish honest limits of medical care
- Illustrate the responsibility to contribute health expertise to public dialogue
- Demonstrate respect of community leadership
- Relate to the responsibility to work for health of the public:
 - Connect Community Health Research Project (CHRP) work with other community visits

TCMC is committed to non-discrimination in all employment and educational opportunities.

TCMC's Agency Partners

WEST REGION

AIDS Resource Alliance
Agency on Aging (STEP)
Albright Life
Children's Development Center
Department of Veteran Affairs - Vet Center
Family Promise of Lycoming County
Hope Enterprises
The Learning Center (Adult Literacy)
Roads to Freedom:
Center for Independent Living
Saving Grace Homeless Shelter
Shepherd of the Streets

Thank You!

West Student Perspective

*"During my visit to **Hope Enterprises**, I was excited to be a part of the energy and positivity. They've certainly fulfilled their mission of enhancing the lives of individuals."*

-Lauren McGee

*"My experience at **Shepherd of the Streets** was extremely enlightening. I really appreciated that so many people were willing to share their stories about struggles in medicine with visiting students. As a future provider, I also found it helpful to hear about some of the specific access issues that affect so many and hope that this awareness will help guide me in the future to best care for my own patients!"*

-Victoria Quimpo

*"Spending a day at the **Central Pennsylvania Food Bank** was a really unique experience. We got to go out and deliver food boxes to elderly citizens of Williamsport and it was amazing to see how much they appreciated the food. It was also a great experience just to learn about the community of Williamsport overall!"*

-Sarah Lowry

West Family Perspective

The Family Centered Experience (FCE) program is an important part of TCMC's patient-centered, community-based curriculum. Each year during the Community Week Experience, first year students are paired with a patient. They visit their patient three times a year for two years to learn the human aspect and personal family experiences that arise from managing a chronic or serious illness. This year, Cassie Carson of Lock Haven shared her memories of coping with her son's congenital heart defect with TCMC students:

"Anyone who has dealt with a loved one who is ill or injured has a different story to tell. Our story was supposed to be happy and wonderful, a birth of a child. In one split second this changed without warning. Our son, Mycah, was born with a congenital heart defect. He spent the first 28 days of his life in the hospital and had his first open heart surgery when he was 2 days old."

Students are focused on learning all the medical information to know how to properly care for their patients, but there is a huge emotional responsibility that comes with practicing medicine. They need to know how to handle a crying mother and scared siblings. They need to realize that their body language speaks volumes to a terrified parent."

I remember the day a health care professional told me to stop talking to my son because I was agitating him. I was devastated. I had not been able to hold him and now I couldn't talk to him. Later, as I stood staring at Mycah ready to burst out in tears or fall to the ground in exhaustion, another provider pushed a rocking chair over to me and asked me if I had gotten a chance to hold him yet. I began to cry and told her no. She took the time to get all the tubes adjusted, found a warm soft blanket to wrap him in, and handed him to me. At that moment I felt like I was actually his mom! That moment gave me hope. Something that took just a few extra minutes. I shared this story with the students because these are the things that textbooks don't teach, but we, as parents who have lived this horror, can teach. We believe our work with the Family Centered Experience is our chance to give back to the medical community for saving his life."

If you or someone you know is interested in applying to become an FCE participant, please contact TCMC's Regional Campus Office at 570.504.9067 or email rcr@tcmedc.org.



Mycah Carson
1st Baseball Game